# Bibliographic References

*The Real Fall of Nikola Tesla: What They Got Wrong*

A compiled record of the historical, biographical, and archival sources consulted in the research and preparation of this episode.

Compiled for documentary and educational reference purposes.

## Note on This Document

The sources below are organized to follow the chronological arc of the episode itself, from Tesla's early years and departure from Edison's employ through the Westinghouse contract, the Wardenclyffe project and its funding by J.P. Morgan, and Tesla's final years, death, and posthumous legal vindication. Where popular legend and documented historical record diverge — as with the 1897 Westinghouse settlement, the origin of the Edison bonus story, and the reasons for Morgan's withdrawal from Wardenclyffe — the relevant primary and scholarly sources are marked accordingly.

## I. Early Life and the Edison Years (1856–1886)

Carlson, W. Bernard. Tesla: Inventor of the Electrical Age. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

*The principal modern academic biography of Tesla, drawing extensively on primary correspondence and patent records. Used throughout this episode as the main check against popular legend, including its critical treatment of the undocumented origins of the Edison $50,000 bonus story.*

Tesla, Nikola. My Inventions: The Autobiography of Nikola Tesla. Originally serialized in Electrical Experimenter, 1919.

*Primary source for the Edison dynamo-repair anecdote and the S.S. Oregon story; the sole surviving account of the alleged bonus offer, written more than three decades after the events described.*

O'Neill, John J. Prodigal Genius: The Life of Nikola Tesla. New York: Ives Washburn, 1944.

*The original published source of the dramatic "torn contract" scene between Tesla and George Westinghouse, written by a personal friend and admirer of Tesla shortly after his death; included here as the origin point of a narrative later examined against Westinghouse Electric's own financial records.*

## II. The Westinghouse Contract and the War of Currents (1888–1897)

Jonnes, Jill. Empires of Light: Edison, Tesla, Westinghouse, and the Race to Electrify the World. New York: Random House, 2003.

*Standard narrative history of the AC/DC current war, including Edison's public electrocution campaign, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition bid, and the 1893 Niagara Falls contract.*

Cheney, Margaret. Tesla: Man Out of Time. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981.

*Widely cited early biography; contains the reproduction of Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company's 1897 annual report entry recording a payment of $216,600 to Tesla for outright purchase of his patent rights, the documentary basis for reassessing the "received nothing" version of the torn-contract legend.*

"Topsy the Elephant" and the Kemmler execution: contemporary press accounts, The New York Times, August 1890 and January 1903.

*Contemporary reporting on the botched 1890 execution of William Kemmler and the 1903 Coney Island electrocution of Topsy, used to document Edison's public anti-AC campaign.*

## III. Wardenclyffe and J.P. Morgan (1900–1906)

Carlson, W. Bernard. Tesla: Inventor of the Electrical Age. Chapters 14–16, covering the Colorado Springs experiments, the negotiation with J.P. Morgan, and the undisclosed change in scope from wireless telegraphy to wireless power transmission.

*Primary academic source for the reproduction and analysis of Morgan's July 1903 letter declining further investment, and for the total construction costs against the original $150,000 commitment.*

Seifer, Marc J. Wizard: The Life and Times of Nikola Tesla. New York: Citadel Press, 1996.

*Detailed biographical treatment of the Wardenclyffe project's construction, the 1915 foreclosure by George C. Boldt, and the 1917 demolition of the tower for scrap.*

Blakemore, Erin. "Nikola Tesla and the Tower That Became His 'Million Dollar Folly.'" Smithsonian Magazine, May 1, 2024.

*Popular science journalism summarizing the Wardenclyffe timeline and Tesla's radio patent filings relative to Guglielmo Marconi's, used as a secondary cross-check on dates.*

## IV. Later Years, Death, and the Seized Papers (1906–1943)

Seifer, Marc J. Wizard: The Life and Times of Nikola Tesla. Chapters covering Tesla's final years at the Hotel New Yorker, the 1930s "teleforce" (death ray) proposals, and his death on January 7, 1943.

Cheney, Margaret. Tesla: Man Out of Time. Chapters on the custody of Tesla's papers by the U.S. Office of Alien Property Custodian following his death, and their subsequent technical review.

*Primary source for the account of the wartime seizure of Tesla's private papers and the conclusions of the government-appointed engineer who examined them before their release to Tesla's nephew, Sava Kosanović.*

## V. Posthumous Vindication: The 1943 Supreme Court Ruling

Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. of America v. United States, 320 U.S. 1 (1943).

*The official Supreme Court ruling invalidating several of Guglielmo Marconi's radio patents in favor of earlier patents held by Tesla and others, issued in the context of a patent-infringement suit brought against the U.S. government over wartime radio equipment.*

Carlson, W. Bernard. Tesla: Inventor of the Electrical Age. Epilogue, on the legal and financial context of the 1943 ruling and its limited relationship to any broader historical "vindication" of Tesla's reputation.